

Babbo Italian Eatery: Feasting for a Cause

But community engagement extends far beyond the dining tables

by Tyler Butler

► In the heart of Glendale, Arizona, a culinary revolution began in 2002 when Ken Pollack founded the first Babbo Italian Eatery. His vision was clear: to create a modern take on Italian cuisine that would not only tantalize taste buds but also foster a sense of community. Fast forward to the present, and Babbo has not only achieved its culinary goals but has also carved a path as a socially responsible corporate entity.

From the outset, Babbo's mission was to offer an exceptional dining experience rooted in tradition and family values. By using the freshest ingredients and maintaining affordability, Babbo quickly won the hearts of its patrons. "If you give, you will get; and if you get, you should give," were the words of Ken Pollack, the late founder of Babbo, a sentiment that would become a guiding principle for the company's actions.

Over the years, the Babbo family expanded to eight locations throughout the valley, solidifying their presence in the community. This growth prompted a deeper realization of the symbiotic relationship between business and community. Babbo's success was intricately linked to the support of the people around them. This realization sparked the birth of their corporate responsibility journey.

Tragedy struck when Ken Pollack lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. This loss galvanized Babbo Italian Eatery's commitment to giving back to the community in an even more profound way. To honor Ken's memory, Babbo dedicated itself to fighting pancreatic cancer. Its mission shifted toward raising awareness about this deadly disease and supporting crucial research for a cure. Thus, the Seena Magowitz Foundation became the focal point of Babbo's charitable efforts, given its commitment to pancreatic cancer research, clinical trials and patient advocacy.

Babbo's engagement with the community extended far beyond the dining tables. Its outreach programs embodied the essence of its founder's words, emphasizing the reciprocity of giving and receiving. Partnering with local churches, schools and clubs, Babbo orchestrated fundraisers that not only supported community programs but also nurtured a sense of togetherness. Its dedication to making a positive impact didn't stop at fundraising. Babbo's staff, driven by a shared ethos, actively participated in volunteer initiatives ranging from toy drives to bike builds, underscoring their commitment to creating lasting change.

Babbo Italian Eatery's philanthropic spirit was not confined to volunteering and fundraising. Recognizing the importance of financial support, Babbo directed its resources toward organizations such as Phoenix Younglife, Phoenix Children's Hospital, Arizona Helping Hands, Nourish Phoenix and the Seena Magowitz Foundation. Its contributions weren't mere financial transactions; they were investments in the betterment of its community.

A distinctive feature of Babbo's community engagement efforts is its inventive approach to fundraising. Babbo's



restaurants have become stages for change, hosting events that resonate with its core values. By dedicating 20% of sales on special fundraising days to local causes, Babbo empowers schools and charities to make meaningful strides in their programs. This initiative highlights Babbo's unwavering commitment to the future of its community and the well-being of the community members.

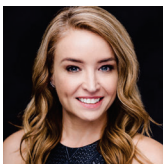
Babbo Italian Eatery's commitment reached new heights with its annual Day of Giving participation. A momentous occasion, this day saw all profits from Babbo's eight locations channeled to the Seena Magowitz Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. The gesture was amplified by the generosity of Ken Pollack's family and Roger Magowitz, resulting in a staggering contribution of more than \$150,000. This substantial sum fuels pancreatic cancer research, pushing the boundaries of treatment and offering support to patients and their families.

Ken Pollack's legacy of giving, encapsulated in his poignant words, continues to reverberate through Babbo Italian Eatery's ethos. His belief in the reciprocal nature of giving and receiving has become the cornerstone of Babbo's corporate responsibility journey. As they stand at the intersection of culinary excellence and community impact, Babbo remains committed to nurturing its neighborhoods, serving with integrity and fighting for a future without pancreatic cancer.

In the words of Ken Pollack, "If you give, you will get; and if you get, you should give." Babbo Italian Eatery has taken these words to heart, weaving them into the fabric of its existence. In an industry where profit often overshadows purpose, Babbo stands as a testament to the profound impact a business can have when it embraces its responsibility to its community. With each dish served and each dollar contributed, Babbo is not only nourishing appetites but also nourishing the spirit of compassion and change. As it continues to evolve and expand, its journey serves as a reminder that success is sweeter when shared, and the greatest measure of prosperity lies in the positive transformation of lives. ■



Learn more about the Seena Magowitz Foundation whose mission is to harness collective synergy to defeat pancreatic cancer. seenamagowitzfoundation.org



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